

During the meal the queen instead of being cheerful as was her wont appeared to be rather down-cast, and on being asked the reason, related her experience of the day and spoke as follows.

"My dear, Lord and husband: I have the honour of being the wife of the ruler of this vast empire. The Imperial Treasury is full to overflowing. Have I not as your wife any claim on this vast hoard! My request is that I may have a maid servant who may lend me a hand in the performance of domestic duties."

The Sultan listened patiently and when she had finished he called for his account book and showed the queen that he had almost no balance.

Then he addressed his wife: "My dear wife you know full well that what I earn with my own hands is barely sufficient to make both ends meet."

To engage a servant is out of the question. As for the treasury I know it is full, but I believe that is not meant for me. I am only a trustee and have no right to take even a pice for my personal use. It belongs to the people and must be spent on public needs. But rest assured that if I can manage to earn a little more I will try to meet your wishes and make life more comfortable for you."

A miracle indeed! It was the Alchemy of Islam which had transmuted a fierce Turk into a humble Dervish who little cared for the comforts of his family and had such a regard for the welfare of the people entrusted to his care.

STORY 2.

THE ISLAMIC IDEAL OF COMMERCIAL HONESTY.

IMAM ABU HANIFA was the greatest jurist of Islam. By profession he was a dealer in silk cloth. Once he had to dispose of a high priced piece of cloth, which unfortunately had a certain flaw in it which considerably reduced its value. When he handed the piece to the broker he took care to draw his attention to that flaw and expressly enjoined him, to let the customer see it, before settling its price.

The piece remained with the broker for many days, so that he forgot all about the flaw and at last succeeded in selling it for several hundred pieces of silver.

When he brought the money to the Imam the first question that he put him before touching the money was whether he had shown the flaw to the buyer before striking the bargain, and on the broker replying in the negative he at once sent him off in search of the purchaser who in his opinion had been defrauded in the transaction.

The broker searched for him everywhere, but could find no trace of him, and after a fruitless search came back to the Imam and related the story of his failure. Upon this the Imam sent the whole sum to the Bait-ul-mal (public treasury) saying that he could not determine how much of the money was due to him and how much ought